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ABSTRACT

Eight steps for organizing an energy education event are outlined in this document. These steps include: (1) forming an organizing team; (2) assessing needs; (3) setting goals and objectives; (4) locating resources; (5) developing strategies; (6) implementing a plan; (7) evaluating a plan; and (8) planning for the future. The major focus in the steps is on tailoring efforts to fit the local community's needs and interests, since local communities not only consume energy but also have the most to say in how it is consumed. A short list of resources available in Michigan and bibliography are included. The document was prepared to help develop energy education activities for A Day to Conserve and Renew Energy (C.A.R.E.), an event sponsored by the Energy Administration, Michigan Department of Commerce. (Author/JN)

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ORGANIZING AN ENERGY EDUCATION EVENT

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ENERGY ADMINISTRATION

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

ENERGY (en' er jē) n. pl. gies 1 - strength of expression:
2 - potential forces; inherent power; capacity for vigorous action:
3 - the capacity for doing work and overcoming resistance.

The definition above suggests that energy, like people, is a noun with an action potential and emphasis.

SYNERGY (sin' er jē) n. The simultaneous action of separate agencies which, together, have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects.

Synergy, with the same derivation as energy, suggests that by working together, we can have a greater effect than acting in divergent directions.

a day to CARE
CONSERVE AND RENEW ENERGY

As part of a ten-year national program focusing on energy awareness and action, the Energy Administration, Michigan Department of Commerce, is sponsoring A Day to Conserve and Renew Energy (C.A.R.E.) on March 19, 1982. Although the energy problems facing us are international in scope, energy conservation takes place at the local community and individual level. Through A Day to C.A.R.E., citizens are encouraged to develop an energy conservation ethic, to learn about using renewable resources and to become effective teachers helping others learn how to conserve.

This packet was prepared by:

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ORGANIZING AN ENERGY EDUCATION EVENT

There are many ways to describe the process of organizing people to take action. The particular descriptions used in this packet involves the following steps. Read the suggestions provided for each step and then adapt them to your style and to your situation.

STEPS FOR ORGANIZING

FORMING AN ORGANIZING TEAM

ASSESSING NEEDS

SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

LOCATING RESOURCES

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

IMPLEMENTING A PLAN

EVALUATING A PLAN

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

This packet does not intend to be complete; it serves as an outline to assist you in planning energy education activities. In this packet, the term community is loosely defined; it could mean neighborhood, town, school, organization, or any audience to which your efforts are directed. Along with special publications for Energy Education Day such as this one, the Energy Administration has more than 180 additional publications providing information about saving energy, using renewable resources (solar, water, wind, etc.) and obtaining financial assistance. All of these are available at no charge. To obtain any of these publications, or to get answers to energy-related questions, call the Energy Administration on the Energy Hotline (toll-free) 1-800-292-4704, or write:

Energy Extension Service Clearinghouse
Energy Administration
Michigan Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 30228
Lansing, Michigan 48909

The skills, knowledge, and resources you have learned in previous organization efforts can be effectively transferred to the topic of energy. As you have probably learned, two of the most important factors in successful organizing are to give priority to local decision-making and focusing the organizational activities on local concerns. It is local communities who consume energy and who have the most to say about how it is consumed.

In addition to this emphasis on tailoring efforts to fit your local community's needs and interests, this packet approaches energy education from the following perspective. We urge you to:

START SMALL

CREATE AND REGENERATE ENTHUSIASM

SHARE RESOURCES

HAVE FUN

*Many of the ideas, concepts, and examples here are taken from Reaching Up, Reaching Out: A Guide to Organizing Local Solar Events by the Solar Energy Research Institute of Boulder, Colorado.

FORMING AN ORGANIZING TEAM

Organizing teams:

- represent the different points-of-view and concern in the group or community with which you are working
- help define the needs to be addressed
- identify resources for doing the job--human, technical, financial and material
- carry out tasks too numerous and large for one person
- collect feedback on the effectiveness of the program

Persons you may wish to include on a committee may be from the following groups:

- ▶ Educators at all levels
  - elementary
  - secondary
  - post secondary
  - adult education
  - administrators
- ▶ Business Representatives
- ▶ Alternative Energy Businesses
- ▶ Women's Groups
- ▶ Cooperative Extension Service
- ▶ Community Action Agencies
- ▶ Environmental Groups
- ▶ Religious Organizations
- ▶ Neighborhood Associations
- ▶ Local Utilities
- ▶ Community Service Groups
- ▶ Elected Officials

If your effort is community-wide consider including your local legislators and local elected officials. Lawmakers are interested in the needs and desires of their constituencies and their support can contribute significantly to your success.

If the task is large (an energy fair, a series of workshops, or a tour of solar homes), it may be helpful to divide into subcommittees such as:

- ■ publicity
- ■ arrangements
- ■ networking
- ■ budget
- ■ fundraising
- ■ volunteer coordination
- ■ clerical support
- ■ registration
- ■ clean-up

An important tip to remember when working with committees is to get things down on paper. An agenda is essential for an effective meeting.

SAMPLE AGENDA

- what has happened
- what needs to be done
- when it will be done

ASSESSING NEEDS

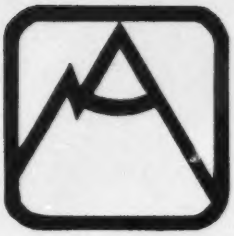
Several questions should be considered in assessing needs:

- who is the audience? (school children, low-income residents, the general public, the financial community)
- what are the problems of the audience and the community? (lack of awareness or information about energy conservation actions, lack of mass transit)

In relation to these two major questions, more detailed questions concerning the overall program may need to be considered:

- what are the nature, causes, and consequences of the problems? (result of lack of money or information, persons leaving the community)
- what are some solutions? (workshops, fairs, training programs, tax credits, loans, grants, other financial assistance)
- what resources are necessary to carry out the solutions? (human, technical, financial, or material)
- what can your organization do to help meet these needs? Do you have the resources within your organization or would networking and linkages with other organizations be mutually beneficial?

Energy touches every facet of our lives. Many organizations are currently sponsoring events and activities related to energy issues. Find out what they are and how your organization might contribute to them. If there are areas that are lacking, consider developing a program to meet these needs.



SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After the needs of the community have been clarified, the next step is to set the goals and objectives to meet those needs. Goals are broadly defined destinations and objectives are specifically defined plans.

A useful tool in keeping your project on track is the A B C D method of setting objectives:

A -- audience; who is it that the activity will be directed towards?
B -- behavior; what is it that the participants are to do or learn?
C -- condition; where will this learning or behavior take place?
D -- degree; how much are the participants to learn or to do?

SAMPLE GOAL

- to help commuters save gasoline

SAMPLE OBJECTIVE

- to reduce gasoline consumption (Behavior) by 10% (Degree) for commuters (Audience) by establishing a ridesharing service (Condition).

The questions asked are similar to those asked during the needs assessment phase:

- appropriateness?
- effectiveness?
- outcomes?
- resources?

LOCATING RESOURCES

This step should be carried on throughout the process from forming an organizing team to planning for next year. All objectives, to be realistic, must take available resources into account. With some projects, you may want to start with locating resources. With others it may not be necessary until strategies have been outlined. It may be advisable to continually assess resources, lest good plans may be shelved for lack of human, technical, financial, or material resources.

A good place to begin is to assess the resources that you or those close by are aware of. You may be surprised at the number of first-hand resources.

Consider the following categories of resources, along with some strategies for using them. Keep in mind the limitations in using certain resources such as availability and expense.

- personal--skills and knowledge in energy
- community--constituencies
- organizations and institutions--technical assistance
- human--specialist
- material--building supplies
- financial--money or staff

After you have collected resources, you may enhance their use by establishing a resource center. This may be no more than a drawer in a file cabinet and as much as a separate room, but it is useful to collect and organize resource and reference materials in one central place so that all involved will know where to go for information. It is a good idea to have one person responsible for the information so that organization will be of one concept. The local library may be able to assist you in the process of setting up a resource center.

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

The development of strategies should stem directly from the needs assessment, the establishment of goals and objectives, and the locating resources phase. This stage will vary greatly from project to project, but there are a few important things to keep in mind.

Enlisting the support of other groups - Along with providing in-kind and other resources, groups are a good way to reach out to diverse people through their constituencies. Also, it is sometimes a good idea to "piggyback" your efforts on an existing program such as a home and garden show, 4-H youth fairs, church bazaars.

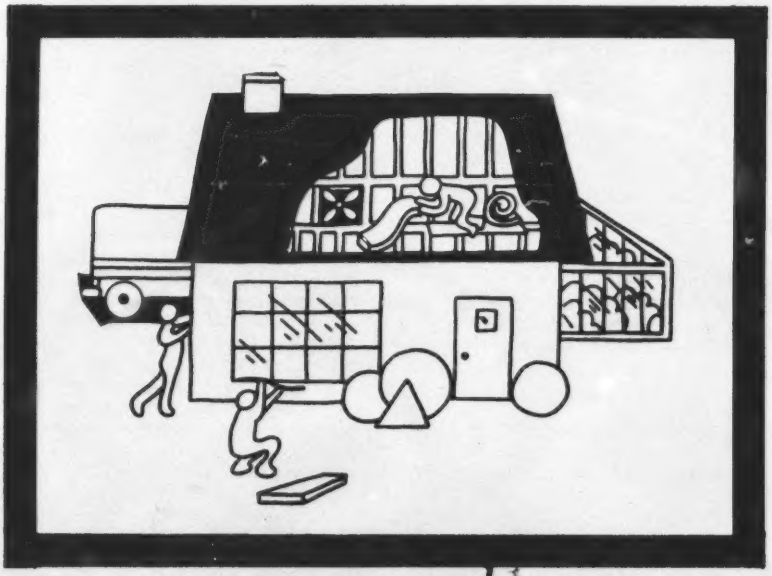
Consider the needs, mind-set and schedules of your audience. Would your audience prefer a fun fair or a serious seminar? What about the time of the event? Are a series of evening meetings more appropriate for the schedules of your audience than a weekend packed with activities?

Look around for what other people have done. If you are considering a similar type of project, contact the persons responsible and see what they went through; sources of funding, problems, success...

Establish a timeline. After you have decided on the specifics of your event, it may be a good idea to develop a timeline. They may be a chore to develop, but are often invaluable in establishing initiation points for certain phases of the project and in checking the progress of activities or tasks already begun.

Look to diverse sources for funding. When soliciting funds from potential contributors, it is a good idea to ask for cash for a specific line item. That way, the donors will know exactly where their money is going. If cash donations are not available, ask for in-kind services. Always be sensitive to what the donor may be able to get out of the contribution (advertising, promotion, enhanced public image, self satisfaction, tax deduction...) and try to meet those needs. Sale of materials (cookies, buttons, T-shirts) or services (car wash, leaf raking) are tried and true ways to raise money, but they almost always require on-going staff or considerable volunteer time. Benefit concerts are good fund raisers, but require the gracious contributions of entertainers and behind the scenes folks.

Keep the budget manageable. All too often good ideas and projects are shelved unnecessarily because of the lack of a sizeable grant. As state and federal dollars become more scarce for efforts of this nature, a great deal of thought and creativity needs to go into the budget planning process. Many services can be in-kind, piggybacking on the resources of existing groups. Wherever possible, substitute formal services for those of a more informal nature, and use volunteers extensively and wisely.



SAMPLE BUDGET ITEMS OR IN-KIND ALTERNATIVES

Printing/Typesetting
Can you type it and run off copies yourself instead?

Postage/Bulk Rate Permit
Can you hand deliver or borrow another sponsoring group's permit for mailing?

Telephone Answering Service
Can you find volunteers to staff phones at all times? Can you borrow a phone-answering machine?

Registration Materials
Can you get some office or store to donate these?

Copying
Does one of your committee members have access to a machine?

Equipment Rentals
Can you borrow from schools, libraries, community centers?

Instructor's Fees
Can you find people willing to volunteer their services, or will someone else offer to pick up the tab? Perhaps your volunteers can house out-of-town instructors?

Facilities Rental
Can you find free space to use?

Refreshments
Would homemade do just as well? Maybe a restaurant or food store would provide a discount.

Travel
Can you find people close to home who will be as much an attraction as a distant celebrity?

Film Rental
Does a cosponsor have a good film you can borrow?

Handouts
Can you find free or inexpensive materials? Does a cosponsor have access to bulk quantities?

Paid Staff and Benefits
Maybe a business or public office can donate someone's time instead of money?

Liability Insurance
This is a must for large or hand-on events.

Never underestimate promotion. All the hard work that goes into planning an event will seem worthless if no one attends. Consider many different types of promotion, all the way from hand-delivered flyers to television public service announcements. Figure the most cost-effective way to reach the greatest number of people with the least expenditure of resources. Some promotional tools include:

- radio and TV public service announcements
- press releases
- flyers
- announcer read radio spots
- piggybacking on existing events
- concerts

IMPLEMENTING A PLAN

Following your timeline should be of great help in implementing your project. If detailed, it might be all you need to carry out your event. It is more likely, however, that unforeseen circumstances will arise, and these will need to be dealt with on demand. By careful planning it is hoped that these will be kept to a minimum.

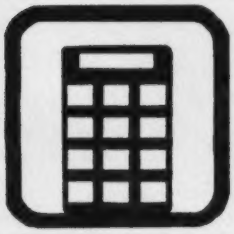
Some things you may want to consider:

Back-up preparation. It is a good idea to have additional audio-visual equipment (projectors, tape players, overhead projectors) available in case of malfunction.

Confirmation of presentors/speakers/instructors. Written confirmation including the date, time, location, topic and express purpose of the event is a good idea not only for you, but also allows for any clarification that needs to be made.

Hospitality Committee. On the day of the event have persons available to greet people and answer questions. It is especially important to make sure that speakers are met, given their name tags, room assignments and any material or A-V equipment necessary for their presentation.

Think optimistically. Expect an unusually large turnout and have extra persons on hand to help.

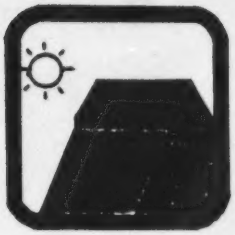


EVALUATING A PLAN

A measure of the success of the program should include variations on the following questions:

- what was most helpful about the activities?
- what was the least helpful?
- what should be done differently next time?
- where did you find out about the event?
- what is your occupation and/or background?
- how will you use what you have learned?

Format could include a questionnaire or simply asking participants' reactions.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

After the event, bring the organizing team together once more for an analysis of the evaluation. The first question to ask is: what went particularly well? Other questions may include: What was learned? What were some problems? Were people able to identify skills or strengths not previously known?

It may be a good idea to write a wrap-up report complete with photographs or other documentation, and recommendations for next year. It is best to do this while the event is still fresh in your mind.

Remember, energy education cannot be confined to any one day or any special setting. Energy education is an ongoing process. Don't let the fact that your event can't be held on A Day To C.A.R.E. hinder your efforts.

There are many advantages to energy conservation: decreasing dependence on foreign imports, saving energy for future generations, buying time to develop alternatives, and it costs less to save a barrel of oil than to produce it. Also, consider these more personal advantages:

- increasing skills and self-confidence through do-it-yourself programs
- saving money and saving energy
- participating in group interaction and dynamics and increasing skills for other areas of life
- enforcing the idea of working together to create a better world

In summary, remember to:

START SMALL
CREATE AND REGENERATE ENTHUSIASM
SHARE RESOURCES
HAVE FUN

RESOURCES

Community Action Agencies

All Michigan counties are represented by one of thirty Community Action Agencies, who are involved in numerous energy related issues dealing with low-income citizens including weatherization assistance and utility shut-off programs. They have developed a workshop model for training weatherization crews and are available to train any group in their service area (listed under county government).

Cooperative Extension Service

There is a Cooperative Extension Service office covering all Michigan counties which has staff mambers involved in community development projects, some related to energy, and who also have acce. to many resources (also listed under county government).

Community Colleges and Universities

Many colleges have individuals who are involved in community development and energy and who can identify other resources.

Utility Companies

Most energy utilities have an information/public affairs division and a few run speakers bureaus for groups in their service area (check in the telephone directory for your local branch office).

Energy Administration Information Clearinghouse

The Energy Administration has more than 180 publications providing information about saving energy, using renewable resources and obtaining financial assistance. Call the Energy Hotline (toll-free) 1-800-292-4704, or write:

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*Can be obtained by writing: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402

#Available from Michigan Energy Information Clearinghouse toll-free HOTLINE 1-800-292-4704.